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## JEWISH ETHICAL WILLS.

WHAT for want of a better term may be called Ethical Wills (צוואות), or, in other words, the express directions of fathers to their children and of aged teachers to their disciples, constitute an important branch of Jewish ethical literature. The value of these wills was recognised by Zunz, who, in order to illustrate the elevated ethical tone of mediæval Judaism, quotes passages from three of these documents. Yet the extent of this literature has, I believe, hitherto been far from duly estimated. The most complete bibliography is, and must continue to be, very defective. Wills of this class are not always come-at-able, being often hidden away in unexpected places. Besides, rapid additions to the series are being constantly made in modern times. For there are fashions even in death, and the ethical will is a Jewish fashion now much honoured in the observance. True, the main lines of thought remain identical, and there is a strong tendency towards monotonous uniformity in the later representatives of the class. Yet, even if the thoughts are not new, the modes of expressing them are often fresh and original, even now, when all that is said has already been said before. Here is a fine passage in which a nineteenth century father transforms a Midrashic idea into a philosophy :—

Every father is bound to leave an exhortation for his children, to instruct them in the fear of God, and in the manner of his worship. Even if a man were himself quite perfect, he has not done all his duty by perfecting himself ; for, unless he strongly feels the impulse to perfect others, he cannot be himself perfect, inasmuch as he has overlooked the command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Nor can he have walked in the ways of God, whose attribute of goodness makes others good. If this be so with regard to those who

are not related to a man, much more does it apply to the case of his own sons and daughters who are a part of himself, for in setting them right he is setting himself right.

One can almost read between the lines of this "counsel of perfection" a pronounced antipathy to the Hegelianism which at the moment bade fair to swamp the Universities of Europe. Aaron ben Abraham, the author of this will (1819), hardly maintains this same high level throughout, yet one other remark of his may be cited, because it is true in itself, and moreover shows how modern circumstances do to some extent tinge the directions of Jewish fathers to their children :—

Enthusiasm is a virtue, but it must be kept under control ; it must not be suffered to become habitual and mechanical. For if a man be enthusiastic from habit, he runs as much risk of being carried wildly to do wrong as of being led to do right, his enthusiasm, and not he, being the master of his will.

Similar brilliant flashes of originality relieve the impression of sameness which a casual inspection of the later ethical wills is apt to leave. Nor do I wish to imply that the earlier specimens are quite free from the same imputation. From the middle of the eleventh century onwards, the Jewish ethical wills begin to be largely composed of moral maxims derived from the Talmud and other Rabbinical literature. But though the jewels be more or less identical, the setting varies very considerably ; and I fancy that in ethical literature generally it will be found that original thought displays itself in form rather than in substance. Besides, it is a point of considerable interest to observe what passages of the Talmud were the favourites of individual Jews. The Talmud is so rich in ethical maxims that there was little opportunity left for independent creation. Similarly the Midrash, with its wealth of fantastic imagery and poetical beauty, is partially responsible for the stunting of poetical originality among Jews. Their whole efforts were directed towards imitation ; and invention, at first unnecessary, ended by being

impossible. With ethics, however, the process commenced later than with poetry, and from the Jewish ethical wills might very easily be gathered many fine thoughts finely expressed, which bear all the marks of pronounced originality.

It is a serious problem to decide what value to attach to death-bed utterances. Nicolas, the author of *Testamenta Vetusta*, writing, it is true, of wills of another class, maintains that "the corporal suffering under which a man often labours when he makes his last testament; the solemn invocation with which it commences; the associations which it cannot fail to excite; and, above all, the recollection that the important document will not see the light until he is removed from that sphere where alone falsehood can be successful or vice be triumphant—tend to render the statements in wills of unquestionable veracity." Yet men have been known to leave by will property that they never possessed, and the question of credibility becomes intensified when the bequests deal with moral rather than material treasures. Men may feel disposed to act up to their character at the last; they would fain have the curtain fall on an effective tableau. The recorded sayings of great men at the brink of the grave are quoted and re-quoted as forming the key to character. This is hardly true without qualification. They are the key, not to character, but to the person's conception of his own character—a vastly different affair. Self-portraiture, to be faithful, must not be self-conscious. A man who has been a hypocrite all his life is not more likely to be displaying his real self when death is nigh, for he has the less chance of being found out. When Antonio de Montezinos, otherwise Aaron Levi, repeatedly asserted on his death-bed, in 1644, that he had met native Jews in South America who were the descendants of the Ten Tribes, and more aboriginal than the Indians, he was no more correct in his assertion than when he repeated the same fable at earlier periods. It was natural that so emotional an enthusiast as

Manasseh ben Israel should seize upon Antonio's statement as the basis of his Messianic fantasies, and build "Israel's Hope" upon this unstable foundation.<sup>1</sup>

But these objections lose their weight when applied to the wills with which we are now dealing. In the Biblical and Talmudical periods, it is true, the dying father summoned his children and addressed to them words of counsel. But the Jewish testaments of a more formal character were for the greater part of an altogether different origin. They were very rarely dictated immediately before the death of their authors, and only exceptionally emanated literally from the sick-room. Mostly they were written calmly in old age, when death was in the course of nature not far distant, or they were composed at times when their authors were about to start on long and dangerous journeys, and felt but scanty hope of ever again beholding their families. The Gaon Elijah of Wilna sent his will as a letter to his household when on the point of setting out for Palestine, and at a much earlier date Joseph Ibn Caspi acted in parallel fashion. A native of Provence, where the streams of Jewish law and Arabian philosophy came to a feeble confluence, Ibn Caspi proceeded from Argentières to Egypt in 1312, with the object of studying in the school of his intellectual master, Maimonides. He thought that where the tree had grown he would find its fruit. But he was disappointed in this hope, and turned his face homewards. In 1332 we find him in Valencia, where he formed the intention of journeying southward, having heard that there were great scholars in Fez. Perchance he might at last discover a teacher or a companion in his studies, or when his thoughts were more sanguine he even dreamt of finding a disciple. Before leaving Valencia he despatched to his son a noble letter containing his ethical will, for he feared that death might overtake him before he had ended his long and

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<sup>1</sup> Graetz, *Geschichte*, x. 97.

wearisome search after congenial minds. Perhaps he felt less isolated when he had taken steps to ensure that his son at least would, on growing to maturity, possess the means of gaining an insight into his father's heart. These instances are the rule; it is entirely exceptional for the will to have been produced immediately before death. A pathetic interest attaches to the testament of Masus ben Judah Loeb, who in the opening lines complains of his weakness with a foreboding all too soon realised. Before he had formally closed the document death surprised him, and he left his work complete in its very incompleteness.<sup>1</sup> So far, however, is this from being more than an unusual phenomenon, that several testaments bear clear traces of having been composed many years before the authors' deaths. Some of them, indeed, must have been written piecemeal, for it is otherwise hard to account for the repetition of the same sentiments that will often recur in the body of one single document. Occasionally it is stated in so many words that the author added and super-added ethical codicils.<sup>2</sup> The length of others, again, precludes the supposition that they could have been hastily compiled; some being formal treatises of considerable proportions. Where, for instance, the writer employs the alphabetical arrangement, we often find two or even three such ethical alphabets, the implication being that all but the first series were afterthoughts. Judah Ibn Tibbon even concludes with a distinct promise of adding to his counsels for his son if opportunity served.

Of these testaments, some were obviously written for publication,<sup>3</sup> and with a passionate eagerness for post-

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<sup>1</sup> Israel Luepschuetz also appears to have been interrupted by death, for he intended to address each of his children individually, and does not do so.

<sup>2</sup> The testament of Solomon Kluger really consists of four separate documents. Sometimes (see *e.g.* the Prague edition, 1783, of S. Hurwitz's testament) a will is printed to fill up a vacant space in another book.

<sup>3</sup> Naphtali Cohen, Abraham Danzig, and some others, expressly direct that their testaments were to be printed.

humorous reputation, betray a striving after effect and halachic ingenuity. But most of them are charmingly simple and naïve. They were intended for the absolutely private use of children and relatives, or of some beloved disciple who held the dearest place in his master's regard. The publication of many of these documents must naturally be quite accidental, and a large number of them—apart from those irreparably lost—still lie unprinted in the possession of the authors' families, or among the MS. treasures of public and private libraries. From time to time the latter are printed, as *e.g.*, two very important testaments by Judah and Jacob Asheri, which Mr. Schechter<sup>1</sup> edited from a British Museum MS. in 1885. Historically considered, these are among the most valuable in the whole collection.

Accident, however, is not the only decisive circumstance in the printing or non-printing of ethical testaments. To some children, the last directions of a father are sacred; to give them to the world would be to profane them. To others, the very sincerity and excellence of their fathers' counsels is a motive for allowing others to share in a treasure which they feel it selfish to hoard up for their own exclusive use. Intended for them alone, they publish them "in order to give merit to many." In the case of distinguished men, of famous scholars and Rabbis of repute, pressure has often been brought to bear to induce publication on the part of the surviving members of the family. Both of these courses have their justification. In a sense, ethical testaments are private communications which ought not to be published without sufficient reason. Indeed, in printing hitherto inedited *צוואות*, I feel almost as though engaged in the desecration of the dead. But it is no mummified and shapeless skeleton that is unrolled, it is a fresh and animate form, speaking with a living voice.

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<sup>1</sup> It is impossible for me adequately to thank Mr. Schechter for the help he has rendered me. Without his assistance this Essay would not have been written; but I am solely responsible for the mistakes.

I can, I repeat, sympathise with those who have refused to give to the world private and confidential communications. But their privacy and naïvete add to their value and their interest. They are the clearest revelation of the man's innermost feelings, for he mostly had no reason to think that his words would be revealed at all. I have sometimes gained a deeper insight into an author's opinions by reading his testament than from all his other published writings. Joseph Ibn Caspi never so ably enunciated his conception of the rights of philosophy nor so unanswerably enforced them as in his last will and testament. Alexander Suesskind nowhere else so clearly manifested the stern sensitiveness of his otherwise gentle disposition, which restrained him from fondling his own children. "I never kissed my children nor took them in my arms," he says, "so as not to accustom them to silly talk, such as people are in the habit of addressing to the young." Was there ever a more naïve self-revelation than this? On the other hand, Naphtali Cohen's simple and perfect affection for his wife comes out very clearly in his ethical will. This Rabbi of Posen, who died in 1719, addresses her as follows:—

My beloved Esther, once from our great love we clasped hands and mutually promised that when either of us two died, the other would pray to die soon afterwards, that we might quit the world together. But this wish was not right, and you have my pardon if you live a hundred years. I altogether undo our compact. If you die first, which God forbid, you must do the same. I ask you not to marry again, though I know I need not say it; but I add the words out of my overwhelming love for you.

It would be hard, again, to find a more bitter, and, at the same time, pathetic expression of an isolation verging on misanthropy than is contained in Saul Hirschel's short and striking testament. In their respective wills, too, we realise Judah Asheri's honourable reluctance to accept a salary for his services as Rabbi; Eleazar the Levite's pet aversion to slander and gossip, together with his pro-



nounced taste for cleanliness; Jacob Asheri's and Abraham Danzig's fondness for *dinim*—though in this they but reflect the tendency of their published works; Ibn Tibbon's keen affection for his books, and relish for literary style; the pseudonymous Judah Chasid's piety, that o'erleaps itself and falls into superstition; S. Kluger's unparalleled honesty, that induced him to order the restoration to their owners of all the books he had borrowed; and more generally, the devotion of the Spanish school to intellectual culture, with a certain display of cold indifference to the ordinary affairs of life, and on the other hand, the predilection of the warmer and more human German school for practical morals and the common concerns of everyday existence. These, and a host of other deep-seated convictions and quaint turns of thought, of curious habits, and equally curious aversions, are revealed in these ethical wills, which may seem, from their designation, to offer so profitless and arid a field for inquiry. There is thus no need for further explanation why so many of these little documents—"small in quantity, but great in quality," to use the favourite motto inscribed on their Hebrew title-pages—have enjoyed a wide popularity. Some of them, especially those that give a conventional presentation of Judaism, have been again and again printed, and new editions are not only constantly appearing, but in some cases these exhortations have been added to the Prayer-book as supplementary devotional exercises.<sup>1</sup>

But whatever the passing indications of contemporary manners, whatever the unexpected touches regarding men

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<sup>1</sup> So popular must these testaments have become that we even find them made the subject of jargon novels. *לעם פאטערס צוואה* (Wilna, 1887) turns on the story of a son who was bidden by his father to adopt a holy and religious life, and to spend his years in performing religious offices and good deeds; and the moral is to enforce the importance of obeying such testamentary mandates. In the Midrash *עשרת הדברות* a father orders his son, Quaker-like, not to take an oath under any circumstances, and the adventures of the son consequent on this prohibition are narrated (Jellinek, *Beth Hamidrash*, I., 72).

and things--and these testaments are a rich mine for the whole range of Jewish *minhagim* or customs—important though these features clearly are, the chief interest in ethical wills is, as their name implies, an *ethical* interest. Zunz quotes a remark of Prof. Hirt, who patronisingly cast a glance at the fourteenth century testament of Asheri, and declared that the ethical principles enunciated by this Jew were superior to what one might have expected even from the Christians of his age. I cannot help thinking that this surprised utterance merely puts into words a delusion shared by many besides Hirt; yet as a matter of fact, it is hard to speak calmly of the magnitude and purity of Jewish ethical literature. To attempt adequately to characterise it lays one open to the charge of prejudiced exaggeration. Our ethical literature belongs to no one period. In some branches of Jewish literature there are unhappily, in the ages following the close of the Talmud, wide chasms hewn out by the constraining hand of circumstance. Often the wedge was forged from within, often in an external workshop. There have been comparatively long periods during which the Jews produced neither poets nor philosophers, neither imaginative writers nor historians; long and dark periods, during which the light of science was obscured, and the refinements of literary style and culture obliterated or ignored. These gaps are inexpressibly sad, but they would have been sadder still in their practical effects, but that they were all bridged over by a broad and solid structure against which the friction of internal faction and the stress of external storm were equally powerless. There is hardly any “local colouring” in the arches of this ethical bridge, there is absolutely no variation in its high moral level. Whether the particular moralist be philosopher or “Stock - Talmudist,” whether he hail from a country in which the Jew was persecuted, or from one in which he was free; whether he wrote at a time of general enlightenment or at a period of wide ignorance; whether

the inspiring fount of his thought were Aristotle or Hegel, though the details will reflect differences in environment, though the style of expression varies with prevailing taste, though the abstract conception of Judaism often changes, yet the Jewish code of morality is without variation, and the noblest ideals form that code. In all the ethical testaments that I have read I do not recollect to have come across a sordid thought or hateful sentiment; intellectually, even religiously, some are low, morally all are high. In these confidential pronouncements may, I think, be sought and found a most effective theoretical vindication of the Jewish character. The conventional idea of the Jew receives a severe blow from the perusal of these pure utterances. This point is well illustrated by what may be termed the burlesque testaments, two or three of which may here be alluded to. In 1703 was printed a will supposed to emanate from Haman. He bids his children to abstain from giving charity as it is not profitable, and to avoid robbing the poor because they possess nothing worth stealing. Canaan, the son of Ham, who is himself the type of unfilial irreverence, is again brought on the stage in the Talmud as the spokesman of equally detestable thoughts. "Five things Canaan ordered his sons: Love one another; love robbery; love deceit; hate your masters; never speak the truth."<sup>1</sup> Revenge, as in the Hamiliar legend, is the motive of the testament of Amalek's ancestress. "The cause of the hatred of Amalek was the outcome of the commands of Timna, sister of Lotan, to her offspring. She was anxious to marry one of the seed of Abraham, but none would accept her. She accordingly became the concubine of Eliphaz, son of Esau (who was of Abraham's race), and bare Amalek. She told him all that had occurred, and directed him with a binding oath to retain this hatred for Israel eternally."<sup>2</sup> Thus, both positively and negatively,

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<sup>1</sup> *Pesachim*, 113 a.

<sup>2</sup> An otherwise unknown Midrash in the צרור המור 75 b.

the Jewish ethical testaments can be subjected to the most minute moral tests. As I have mentioned burlesque testaments, it may be interesting if I allude to the Hebrew will in which Aristotle announces to his pupil, Alexander the Great, a complete revolution in his opinions. He is dying, he writes, and before the letter reaches its destination the author will be no more. Let Alexander destroy all his (Aristotle's) works, and be no longer led astray by false ideas. "If it lay in my power I would collect all my writings and destroy them, for God has opened my eyes, and I now see that the Law of Moses is the only truth" (*Chain of Tradition*, 83). Perhaps this may be paralleled by the closing words of Chaucer's Parson's Tale, in which the poet professes to recant his "worldly vanities," by which he probably meant the *Troilus*. Maimonides too was credited with a similar recantation of his philosophy. The tendency in every age is to make the views of great authorities square with current popular views, and if that be an impossible reconciliation, so much the worse for the great authorities.

The earliest extant ethical will, written as an *independent* document, is that composed about 1050 by Eleazar ben Isaac of Worms, commonly known as Eleazar the Great.<sup>1</sup> The eleventh and twelfth centuries supply few examples, but from the thirteenth century onwards there is no dearth of *צוואות*. It is possible that the renewed popularity of these testaments among Jews may have been due to Mohammedan influence. The Arabs held ethical wills (included under the general designation *Wasaya*) in such high esteem, that some were falsely ascribed by them to revered sages, like Lokman, and even to the foremost Greek philosophers.<sup>2</sup> A similar process, that of wrongly

<sup>1</sup> An interesting article on the subject of Ethical Wills was published by Dr. Neubauer, in the *Jewish Chronicle*, December 4th, 1885. Some striking contrasts between this testament of Eleazar and a Christian poem of the 13th century are to be found in Güdemann's *Cultur*, etc., 1880, page 121.

<sup>2</sup> See Steinschneider (Preface to *Testament of Ibn Tibbon*), and D'Herbelot (*Bibl. Orient.*, sub voce *Vassaia*.)

placing the names of the patriarchs at the head of wills grew up among the Jews, and thus we find a pseud-epigraphic testament of Naphtali,<sup>1</sup> as well as the Christian Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. The view that Mohammedan impulse aided in popularising the ethical will among mediæval Jewish writers is supported by the fact that among the first to resume the fashion were Jewish philosophers of the Spanish school, who had intimate relations with Mohammedan civilisation. Among Christians on the other hand I find no clear indication that the fashion ever became popular.<sup>2</sup> Still the clergy often from their death-beds gave parting precepts to their brethren. From the earliest instances I may cite the case of Bishop Egwin, who, "before his exit, called together his monks and other disciples, and having exhorted them to perseverance in the way of truth and perfection, and to despise the transitory felicity of this world," died in 717. Abbot Gildas, immediately before his demise, for seven days gave moral and religious exhortations to his disciples and the death of Joachim de Flore was preceded by a similar function in the little convent of San Martino. In the preambles of many Christian wills—in England the custom, I believe, became less general in the eighteenth century—may be found declarations of faith, charitable bequests, legacies to provide poor maidens with marriage dowries, and directions as to burial, such as frequently occur in Jewish ethical testaments.

But I have advisedly spoken of the *resumption* by Jews of the fashion in the 'eleventh century, for the earlier Jewish literature proves that from an ancient date the ethical will was a well-established institution among the Hebrews. The Bible contains many such counsels.

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<sup>1</sup> This, as Dr. Berliner informs me, is now published in the Jerusalem edition of the *היכלות*.

<sup>2</sup> Poems, however, containing rules of morals and of etiquette were current. See *e.g.* Dr. Furnivall's interesting *Babes Book* and Dr. Bülbring's introduction to Defoe's *English Gentleman*.

Prominently among these may be mentioned the blessings of Jacob, the dying requests of Joseph to his brethren, the addresses of Moses to the people of Israel, the advice of David to his son Solomon, the restriction laid by Jonadab, the son of Rechab, upon his children against the use of wine, and his exhortation to dwell in tents, and the injunction of the prophet of Bethel on his sons: "When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones" (1 Kings xiii. 31). In several of these passages the verb used is some form of צוה (lit. "to command"), and in later times there has been a tendency to interpret the verb in a restricted sense, so that צוה, comes to mean "to give a צוואה," *i.e.*, to leave an ethical will. When Isaiah prophesies the death of Hezekiah, he bids him צו לבייתך, and the meaning may be, "Give your household directions for their conduct after your death." There can be little doubt that this is the signification of Deut. xxxii. 46, when Moses says, "Set your heart upon all the words which I testify unto you this day, *which ye shall command your children.*" Even more striking in this connection is a passage in Genesis (xviii. 19), where God says of Abraham, "For I have known him in order that he may command his children and his household after him that they may keep the way of the Lord." The latter text, in particular, has been made the basis of an actual rubric, to be found in modern Jewish codes, enjoining on every father, as a bounden duty, to leave moral exhortations for his children's guidance. This feeling is well brought out in the following Midrash: "Jacob felt that his end was near, and besought the divine mercy; 'Ruler of the world!' he prayed, 'take not my soul until I have exhorted my children.' And his wish was granted."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "I came very near dying suddenly in the bath, and I was with difficulty revived and rescued from the sad fate of passing away without צוואה or confession." (Joel Shamariah.) "Love to one's children is shown by leaving them a testament," says the *Orchath Zadikim*. Cf. *Ma'bar Yabok*, Ch. viii.

The Apocrypha still further develops the ethical testament. The dying address of Mattathias to his five sons, recorded in the First Book of the Maccabees, introduces no new features; but another book of the Apocrypha deserves more attention, viz., that containing the story of Tobit. The fourth chapter of that book is in itself a complete and beautiful ethical will. Here the *צוואה* has reached its highest development, and, unless I am gravely mistaken, Tobit's directions to his son, who is about to leave him in search of fortune and of a wife, have inspired the writers of many a later testament. Thus, besides being intrinsically one of the noblest in Jewish literature, the fourth chapter of Tobit is in truth the earliest specimen of the Jewish ethical testament, if by that term be understood the elaborate form which post-Talmudic authors have so successfully cultivated.

The death-scenes in the Talmud, in the course of which many fine ethical precepts occur, are too numerous for me to quote them all at length. Rabbi Akiba laid upon his son seven injunctions, which are a fair summary of practical wisdom:<sup>1</sup>—"Dwell not in the highest part of the town to study Torah. Dwell not in a place whose governors are scholars. Do not return home unexpectedly, and much less should you pay sudden visits to your friends. Go not about with bare feet. Rise early and eat—in the summer because of the heat, in winter because of the cold. Make your Sabbath as a week-day (in respect of food), rather than accept help from others. Exert yourself together with him on whom the hour smiles." The same Rabbi also laid five injunctions on R. Simon ben Yochai, when confined in prison:—"Teach me Torah, my master," said he to Akiba. "Nay," he replied. "If you do not," said Simon, "I will tell my father, and he will denounce you to the Government." "My son," said Akiba, "more ardently than the calf desires to suck, the heifer desires to suckle it."

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<sup>1</sup> *Pesachim*, 112.

"Then," cried Simon, "who is it that is in danger? Is it not the calf?" And Akiba acceded to his request. Rabbi when about to die, called for his sons and for the wise men of Israel, and bade the latter not to mourn for him too long. Akabya ben Mahalalel differed from contemporary authorities in four points of law, and, despite offers of honour and position, refused to abandon his views. After his death a stone was placed on his coffin to mark the ban under which he had lived. On his death-bed he summoned his son, and said:—"My son, follow the majority in those four points." "But, my father, why did you yourself not do so?" "Because I derived my opinions from many authorities, and, therefore, maintained my tradition just as my opponents did. You, however, have only the solitary view of your father to guide you; hence you must discard it, and adopt the decision of the majority." "My father, speak on my behalf to thy comrades." "No, my son! I will not plead for you. Your own acts must bring you whether honour or disgrace."<sup>1</sup> Eleazar ben Azariah was visited by Akiba and other Rabbis near his death. He discoursed on matters of the Law, prophesied Akiba's fate, and, pronouncing on a legal point the verdict, "*Pure*," "his soul departed in purity."<sup>2</sup> In old age many a Rabbi was asked to give some reasonable explanation of his longevity. All offer moral or religious explanations. "I never slept in the house of learning." "I never laughed at a companion's mishap." "I never used nicknames." "Never did I seek honour at the cost of another's disgrace." "I never lay down to rest while an angry word had been left unpar-

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<sup>1</sup> *Eduyoth*, v. 7. A later parallel is related of Isaac Albalia, who, when near his end, ordered his young son, Baruch, to betake himself to Isaac Alfasi, with whom he had differed. "Ask him to bury our quarrel, and to teach thee. I know that he will accept the charge." The father's confidence was well placed, for Alfasi received his opponent's son with cordiality. (*Juchasin*, ed. Philipowski, 214, and ספר הקבלה of Abraham ben David, ed. Neubauer, p. 77.)

<sup>2</sup> *Sanhedrin*, 68a.



doned.”<sup>1</sup> Said R. Joshua ben Levi to his sons, “Be very careful to show respect to an old man who from stress (of age or trouble) has forgotten his learning.”<sup>2</sup>

As I have previously remarked, the earliest ethical testament after the close of the Talmud is the eleventh-century work of Eleazar ben Isaac, of Worms, and, appropriately enough, it borrows largely from the sayings of the Rabbis. Some of the less familiar of his precepts are here cited:—

“Think not of evil ; for evil-thinking leads to evil-doing. . . . Take particular heed of cleanliness. Purify thy body, the dwelling-place of thy soul. . . . Do not talk in the college during the lecture, but listen to the words of the wise. Despise no man ; for many pearls may be found in a poor man’s cloak. . . . Be zealous in visiting the sick, for sympathy will lighten his sickness ; but stay not too long, for his malady is heavy enough without thee. Enter cheerfully, and speak cheerfully. . . . Be ever ready to follow the dead to the grave. For him who does a kindness for nothing God shows unrequited favours. . . . Relieve the poor secretly, not openly ; feed them at thy table, but do not watch them while they eat. . . . My son, prepare for thine own journey, and light the lamp to show thee the way. Leave it not to those who come after thee ; perhaps they will be unable. . . . Be not too much dreaded in thine own house, for this is the cause of many evils. . . . Talk not during the meal, not even words of Torah. . . . Do not reveal thy secrets to thy wife. . . . Be faithful to every one. . . . Eat herbs rather than beg ; beg only of God. . . . Put thy sins in one scale and thy penitence in another : they will balance. Add confession and prayer, and they will turn the balance in thy favour. . . . Sleep not with the light of the moon on thy face, especially when the moon is new. . . . Give of all thy food a portion to God. Let God’s portion be the best, and give it to the poor.”

If it be genuine, the testament of Maimonides to his son Abraham comes next in chronological sequence. The latter

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<sup>1</sup> *Megilla* 26-7. Dr. Lerner kindly suggested this application of the passage. Cf. also *Kethuboth* 103a, B. Bathra 147, ספר היובלים Chs. 20 and 22. T. Jer. Kilaim, 14. Many interesting statements bearing on the last moments of different Rabbis occur in the *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan*. See Chs. xiv., xviii. xix. (end), xxv., Additions to ed. Schechter, pp. 158 and D.

<sup>2</sup> *Berachoth* 8b. Very interesting is *Berachoth* 28b.

portion of this composition looks very much like a spurious attempt to account for the fact that Maimonides makes little or no reference to Rashi and the French school in his works. It consists of a strong denunciation of this school, and recommends that exclusive attention be devoted to the commentaries of Ibn Ezra and Maimonides ; but the earlier section of the testament is less unworthy of the great philosopher, and accordingly I offer a few extracts from it :—

Fear the Lord but love him also ; for fear only restrains a man from sin, while love stimulates him to good. . . . Accustom yourselves to habitual goodness, for a man's character is what habit makes it. . . . The perfection of the body is a necessary antecedent to the perfection of the soul, for health is the key that unlocks the inner chamber. When I bid you attend to your bodily and moral welfare, my object is to open for you the gates of heaven. . . . Measure your words, for the more your words the more your errors. Ask for explanations of what you do not understand, but let it be done at a fitting moment and in fitting language. . . . Speak in refined language, with clear utterance and gentle voice. Speak aptly to the subject as one who wishes to learn and to find the truth, not as one whose aim is to quarrel and to conquer. . . . Learn in your youth, when your food is prepared by others, while heart is still free and unencumbered with cares, ere the memory is weakened. For the time will come when you will be willing to learn but will be unable. Even if you be able, you will labour much for little result ; for your heart will lag behind your lips and when it does keep pace, it will soon forget. . . . If you find in the Law or the Prophets or the Sages a hard saying which you cannot understand, which appears subversive of some principle of the religion, or altogether absurd, stand fast by your faith and attribute the fault to your own want of intelligence. Despise not your religion because you are unable to understand one difficult matter. . . . Love truth and uprightness—the ornaments of the soul—and cleave to them ; prosperity so obtained is built on a sure rock. Keep firmly to your word ; let not a legal contract or witnesses be more binding than your verbal promise even privately made. Disdain reservations and subterfuges, sharp practices and evasions. Woe to him who builds his house thereon ! . . . Bring near those that are far off, humble yourselves to the lowly and show them the light of your countenance. In your joys make the desolate share, but put no one to the blush by your gifts. . . . I have seen the white become

black, the low brought still lower, families driven into exile, princes deposed from their high estate, cities ruined, assemblies dispersed, the pious humiliated, the honourable held lightly and despised—all on account of quarrelsomeness. Glory in forbearance, for in that is true strength and victory. . . . Speech, which distinguishes man from beasts, was a loving gift which man uses best in thinking, and thanking and praising God. Ungrateful would we be to return evil for good and to utter slanders or falsehoods. . . . Eat not excessively nor ravenously. Work before you eat and rest afterwards. From a man's behaviour at a public meal you can discern his character. Often have I returned hungry and thirsty to my house, because I was afraid when I saw the disgraceful conduct of those around me. . . . The total abstinence from wine is good, but I will not lay this on you as an injunction. Yet break wine's power with water, and drink it for nourishment, not for mere enjoyment. . . . At gambling the player always loses. If he indeed wins money, he is weaving a spider's web round himself. . . . Dress as well as your means will allow, but spend on your food less than you can afford. . . . Honour your wives, for they are your honour. Withhold not discipline from them, and let them not rule over you.

Judah Ibn Tibbon, the father of Jewish translators, adopts in his last injunctions to his son a tone of affectionate querulousness. A father is not always the best teacher of his children; his very love may make him unjust and even cruel. He expects so much, he is so nervously anxious; and his impatience contrasts unfavourably with that of a more indulgent because less interested instructor. Judah does not go so far as this, but his intense love for his son probably accounts for his peevishness without necessarily justifying it. Sobieski was asked in extremity to make a will but he laughed the suggestion to scorn. "The misfortune of royalty," said the King, "is, that we are not obeyed while we are alive; can it be expected then that we should be obeyed after we are dead?" Ibn Tibbon justified his testamentary injunctions from the very reverse argument. "Though thou didst not follow me when I was near, obey me when I am far from thee." He then proceeds to give a series of counsels well deserving of reproduction in full; but a few specimen passages

must suffice. The first of my quotations is worthy of Ruskin.

Avoid bad society, make thy books thy companions, let thy book-cases and shelves be thy gardens and pleasure-grounds. Pluck the fruit that grows therein, gather the roses, the spices and the myrrh. If thy soul be satiate and weary, change from garden to garden, from furrow to furrow, from sight to sight. Then will thy desire renew itself and thy soul be satisfied with delight. . . In all that thou dost, take counsel with a friend on whose affection and prudence thou canst rely. . . Contend not with men, and meddle not in a quarrel that is not thine . . . Let not the greatest prospect of gain blind thee to danger; be not as the bird that sees the grains but not the net. . . Read every week the Sabbath portion in Arabic to become familiar with Arabic terms. . . Honour thyself, thy household and thy children, by providing proper clothing as far as thy means allow, for it is unbecoming in a man, when he is not at work, to go shabbily dressed. Withhold from thy belly, and put it on thy back. . . . At thy wedding, thou wast honoured for my sake; endeavour henceforth to merit honour for thine own. . . . Thou mayst accept fees from the rich, but heal the poor gratuitously. Examine thy drugs and medicinal herbs regularly once a week, and do not apply a remedy which thou hast not thoroughly tested. . . If thou writest aught, revise it afterwards, for slips creep in, even into a short letter. Be careful as to grammatical accuracy in the conjugations and genders, for a man's mistakes are ever quoted against him. Endeavour to cultivate a concise and elegant style; attempt no rhymes, unless your versification is perfect. Use no unusual constructions or foreign words. Improve thy handwriting, for beauty of handwriting, the excellence of pen, paper and ink are an index of the writer's worth. Thou hast seen books in my handwriting and knowest how the son of R. Jacob thy master expressed his admiration in thy presence. . . . Be careful in thy diet. It is a disgrace for a physician to suffer himself from intemperance. Shall a man be able to cure others and not be able to heal himself? All thy sickness has been due to eating unwholesome food. Jonadab restrained his sons from many pleasures; I only forbid thee what is injurious. . . . Honour thy wife, for she is intelligent and modest. She is an excellent housewife and no spendthrift. If thou hast to give an order or utter reproof let thy words be gently spoken. . . Be not indifferent to any ailment that comes upon thee or thy children; do not say that it is a trifle; but apply immediate remedies. . . Take particular care of thy books; cover thy shelves with a fine covering, guard them against damp and mice.

Have a complete list of them written out, and examine thy Hebrew books once a month, thy Arabic books every two months and bound volumes once a quarter. If a book is lent to any one make a memorandum of it before it leaves thy house, and when it is returned cancel the entry. Every Passover and Tabernacles call in all books out on loan . . . Enquire after thy sisters in all thy letters and send thy love to them. Read this testament once a day, morning or evening. Take no note of anything that men may say against me, but be silent.

Ibn Tibbon's testament, written about 1190, concludes with a long poetical summary in which chief prominence is given to ethical and religious rules of conduct. Samue , let it be added, gained considerable reputation as a translator, but neither he nor his father was exactly famous for literary style. Maimonides, it is true, spoke well of both, yet one can hardly help regretting that the creation of a Hebrew philosophic terminology was not undertaken by the great master himself.

Moses ben Nachman's testament, which is in the form of a letter to his son, belongs to the middle of the thirteenth century. It was not intended exclusively for private use, and, moreover, its brevity has tended to popularise it. But it well deserves its position in the regard of its readers for its unaffected, if exaggerated, eulogy of humility. Unlike Ibn Tibbon, Nachmanides was content to enjoin on his son the duty of perusing the letter once every week.

Accustom yourself to speak gently to all men at all times, and thus you will avoid anger, which leads to so much sin. . . . Humility is the first of virtues ; for if you think how lowly is man, how great is God, you will fear him and avoid sinfulness. On the humble man rests the divine glory ; the man that is haughty to others denies God. Look not boldly at one whom you address. . . . Regard every one as greater than thyself. . . . Remember always that you stand before God, both when you pray and when you converse with others. . . . Think before you speak. . . . Act as I have bidden you, and your words, and deeds, and thoughts, will be honest, and your prayers pure and acceptable before God.

The fourteenth century presents us with several important testaments, one of which is here published in the original Hebrew for the first time. The Asheri family, in

the older members of which filial affection seems to have been strong, provide three of these ethical wills. *The Ways of Life*, by Asher ben Yechiel, the famous Posek father of famous Posekim, has this especial interest, that it displays in one and the same man a whole-hearted devotion to the legal side of Judaism concurrently with a full appreciation of the importance of its ethical teachings. Asheri was not the only Jew who was at once lawyer and moralist. A son of Germany, he transplanted his country with him to Spain, but though an involuntary exile, his tribulation bears far from bitter fruit in his testament. The lesson of humility and self-surrender which Nachmanides and Asheri inculcate, was being taught at this period by a sterner teacher than they, viz., deadly persecution. Yet Eleazar ben Samuel, whose testament will shortly be given in full, a man who lived and died in the very thick of the dire persecutions that followed the Black Death, utters no word of anger against the persecutors, but counsels his children to deal with Jew and non-Jew alike in a spirit of honesty and friendliness.

Asheri's testament consists of 132 maxims, which in some editions are arranged in daily and weekly portions. It contains a summary of ethics, and, therefore, quotation must be unsatisfactory.

Avoid with utmost rigour pride, hypocrisy, falsehood, mockery, slander and anger. . . . Do not perform the law because of the reward, nor avoid sin because of the punishment, but serve God from love. . . . Sleep not overmuch, but rise with the birds. . . . Rejoice not excessively, for remember how frail your life is. . . . Look not at him who is richer, but at him who is poorer; look not at him who is less wise, but at him who is wiser and better than you. . . . Be not hasty to reply to offensive utterances; raise not your hand against another even if he curse your father and mother in your presence. . . . Give no cause for resentment to a non-Jew, for there is none of them who has not his hour, and their wrath lasts for ever. . . . Associate not with an evil man, a sinner, a man of passionate temper, or a fool, lest disgrace come also upon thee. . . . Do not in secret what you would be ashamed to do in public, and say not, Who will see me? Work to gain your livelihood; trust

to the help of no man. Trust not in your wealth, for wealth raises envious enemies. Be not unkind or disrespectful to your wife; if you put her off from you with your left hand, draw her to you again with your right hand forthwith. . . . Utter naught but the truth; be faithful to all men, even to non-Jews.

The testament of Asheri's son Judah, written like some of the others in rhymed prose, is an important historical document, which, given to the world by Mr. Schechter, has already been turned to account by Güdemann, and probably by others. Yet, as its value is rather historical than ethical, I must refrain, however reluctantly, from citing lengthy extracts from this very remarkable piece of autobiography. He exhorts his sons, not because they are worse than their contemporaries, but because he would have them like those of former generations. "Better is open rebuke than silent love." He tells how in infancy he suffered from a disease of the eye, and was nearly healed by a Jewish woman who rescued him from total blindness, but died before the cure was fully effected. Driven by persecution to Toledo, his father became Rabbi there, and Judah succeeded to the office twenty-three years later. When in doubt as to accepting the post, he opened the Scriptures at 1 Chron. xvii. 2, and followed the favourable omen.

My parents, by reason of the weakness of my eyes, left me to do my will; they never chastised or rebuked me. How, then, shall I rebuke others? . . . I cannot sternly address my children to their face, lest I make them blush, but my heart impels me to write this letter for them to read once a month. . . . Why do you not walk in the ways of your fathers? why is the fear of God not constantly before your eyes. . . . You mix with unfit companions, you do not honour your parents. . . . What have I left undone that a father could do? You have been fed and tended; you have many books, and all my thoughts were for you. . . . You were not brought into the world to eat and drink, and to dress in fine clothes. . . . Read aloud passages from ethical books regularly, but with the intention of practising what you read. . . . Never utter a falsehood. There was a man in our family (Eliakim) who

was always held up as a model for truth. . . . Play no games for money, for gambling is robbery. . . . Avoid scandal, for it leads to many sins. Most men are scandal-mongers. Neither praise overmuch, for that invites depreciatory retorts.<sup>1</sup> . . . Eschew pride. A sage was asked, Why do you invariably show respect to all men? He replied, In every one I recognise some quality higher than mine. If he is old, I say he has done more good than I; if richer, he has done more charity; if he be younger than I, he has sinned less, if poorer, he has suffered more; if he be wise I honour him for his wisdom, if he be not wise, then I am the more culpable if I act wrongly. . . . Let your children marry within our family. The women of our family are accustomed to the ways of scholars, and help them to prosecute their studies. They have no luxurious tastes, and do not worry their husbands with extravagant expenditure, and children mostly resemble their mothers. . . . My father introduced in Germany the custom of giving an exact tithe for the poor, and in Toledo he and his children entered into a formal compact to continue the practice. . . . I am very sorry to take a salary from the congregation; I would do without it if I could, but if God be with me, and I can repay the debts incurred through the failure of my partners in business, I may afterwards live without salary, or with only a very little, and the rest might be devoted to educational and religious objects. This would be better than allowing the congregation not to pay me at all, for I should better use the money in this way than they.

The testament of his brother, Jacob Asheri, is shorter and less interesting. He repeats some of his brother's counsels. Like his father, he bids his children avoid excessive talk; strangely enough he forbids the casting of lots, though Judah Asheri, as we have just seen, himself performed an act, "if not of divination, yet as a sign." "Do not," says Jacob Asheri, "indulge in bodily pleasures except to the extent necessary for keeping yourselves healthy for the service of God." It is strange to find the author of the *Turim* counselling his sons not to go in for needless discussion of legal difficulties. It should have been stated above that both these testaments belong to the first half of the

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<sup>1</sup> "Too much magnifying of men or matter doth irritate contradiction, and procure envy and scorn." (Bacon on *Praise*).



fourteenth century. Asheri and both his sons seem to have died within a period of twenty years (1327-1349).

The circumstances under which the testament of Joseph Ibn Caspi was written in Elul, 1332, have already been alluded to. Ibn Caspi stands at the opposite pole to the Asheri family; to him philosophy was everything, while they were proudly indifferent to it. Ibn Caspi's testament is controversial, but only in the sense that the presentation of a view warmly upheld by some and violently disliked by others necessarily deals with polemics. Ibn Caspi writes in no bigoted spirit; it would have been a poor recommendation of philosophy to a young and eager mind had the father, himself a distinguished advocate of intellectual culture, betrayed narrowness, or written in a vindictive spirit. He was too securely in the right not to treat with indulgence views he held to be wrong. To those who argued that the end of life was the performance of the "commandments" Ibn Caspi here replies: "True, but then to acquire philosophical insight is the first of these commandments." It was a narrowing of Judaism to make Aristotle's works in Maimonised form the only road to it, and Ibn Caspi's testament inevitably would restrict the number of those who could serve God with truth, for the ordinary mortal is not a philosopher. But he never meant to assert a "categorical imperative." He merely claimed for himself the right to obey the law because his reason justified his faith, while he left to others the right to serve God without a philosophical basis for their faithfulness. Not to believe, but to rationally know that God is, that he is one, to love him and to fear him, are the fundamental principles of Judaism. What, then, becomes of the rest of the laws? All must be kept, for "you cannot observe these four truly without observing all the other laws of God." The ceremonies are profitable both in themselves and for their relation to the fundamental principles. The practical precepts enable man's intellect to assert itself, and aid him to know God. He counsels his son to read the halachic works

of the codifiers Maimonides and Alfasi, but does not attach much importance to familiarity with abstruse points of Rabbinical law. It is no intellectual or spiritual deficiency to be ignorant of these technical points, or of the law regulating disputes in which one is never involved. Altogether he writes with a lucidity not always associated with metaphysics, and with a freedom which proves that he was writing for no unfriendly eyes.

How can I know God, and that he is one, unless I know what knowing means, and what constitutes unity? Why should these things be left to non-Jewish philosophers? Why should Aristotle retain sole possession of treasures that he stole from Solomon?<sup>1</sup> . . . No one really knows the true meaning of loving God and fearing him, unless he is acquainted with natural science and metaphysics, for we love not God as a man loves his wife and children, nor fear him as we would a mighty man. I do not say that all men can reach this intellectual height, but I maintain that it is the degree of highest excellence, though those who stand below it may still be good. Try thou, my son, to attain this degree; yet be not hasty in commencing metaphysical studies, . . . and constantly read moral books. . . . When you are twenty marry a wife of good family, beautiful in body and character. Look not for a wealthy dowry, as money is only the means to obtain bread to eat and garments to wear. . . . My son, keep from those sciolists to whom philosophy is the handmaid of scoffing. You will prove yourself the better philosopher the more you study the Torah. . . . I will confess to you, my son, that though in my youth I learnt a great portion of the Talmud. I did not acquire a knowledge of all the *posekim*, and now that I am old I have often to consult, in the matter of ritual law, Rabbis younger than I am. Why should I be ashamed of this? Can one man be skilled in every work? If I want a golden bowl I go to a goldsmith, and do not blush that he is better able to make it than I am. Once I had guests and a family party, when the luckless handmaiden put a butter spoon into the meat dish. As I knew not the ritual law, hungry and thirsty I went impatiently to the Rabbi. He was seated at his meal eating and drinking wine with his wife and children. I waited at his door until the shades of evening fell, and my soul was near to leave me. He told me the law and I returned home, where my guests and the poor were waiting for me. I related what had occurred, for I did not conceal that I am unskilled in law, though I

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<sup>1</sup> See *Mind*, July, 1888, and Graetz's *Monatsschrift*, 1860.

have skill in other branches. Is not the faculty of expounding the knowledge and unity of God of as great weight as familiarity with the law concerning a small butter spoon? I say nothing against those who devote themselves to these halachic matters, but what have the four "commandments of the heart" done that they should be depreciated, or even tabooed? . . . I am asking you to adopt many views that you cannot yet understand. Believe *me* for the present; in time you will appreciate the reasons for things. Let us make a pledge together. *You* do all that I bid you, and *I* undertake that you will enjoy an angelic existence in the world to come. The end of all is, Fear God and keep his commandments, but understand that the latter include not merely practical but also intellectual duties.

A quarter of the century after the above was written there died at Mayence Eleazar the Levite, on the first day of the New Year festival. He was buried on the following day, viz., the 2nd of Tishri, 1357. There are several reasons why I proceed to give a full translation of Eleazar's testament. It is far more representative of its class than any of those from which I have previously quoted. It will give the reader, who may be unfamiliar with the general character of these testaments, a fair impression of the ordinary Jewish ethical will. Eleazar was no great Rabbi, he was a Chazan, and evidently as simple as he was a pure-minded man. Most of the later testaments are variations on one and the same theme, and this of Eleazar, just because of its lack of brilliance or originality, and because it is merely an ordinary specimen of the whole class, may best serve as a type of them all.<sup>1</sup>

These are the things which my sons and daughters shall do at my request. They shall go to the house of prayer morning and evening; they must be careful in the *Tephillah* and the *Shema*. Immediately after the conclusion of the prayers they shall occupy themselves a little with the law, the Psalms, or with deeds of charity. Their business must be conducted honestly, their dealings must be straight-

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Berliner has an interesting article on this testament in the *Jüdische Presse*, 1870, p. 90, etc. My translation was made from a different MS., viz., that contained in the Bodleian Library. Dr. Berliner supplies some valuable references in his article.

forward with Jews or non-Jews. They must be gentle, and prompt to accede to every honourable request that is made of them. They must not talk more than is necessary, and they will thus avoid slander and scoffing. They shall give in charity an exact tithe of their property, and shall never turn away a poor man empty-handed, but they shall give him what they can, be it much or little. If he asks for a lodging over night and they know him not, they shall supply him with money that he pay an inn-keeper. Thus shall they satisfy the demands of the poor in every way that is possible.

My daughters must respect their husbands exceedingly, and they must be always amiable to them; husbands must honour their wives more than themselves.

If they can by any means contrive it, let them live in communities and not in isolation from other Jews, so that my sons and daughters may learn Judaism. Even if compelled to beg for the money to pay a teacher, do not let the young go without this instruction. Marry your children, not too old, to members of respectable families; let not my sons hunt after money by making a low match for that object; but if the family is of low origin only on the side of the mother it does not matter, because Jews always count their descent from the father's side. Let them be careful early on every Friday to prepare everything before the Sabbath begins, while the day is still great, and in winter they shall light the fire before it be dark, in order not to profane the Sabbath. The women must prepare nice candles in honour of the Sabbath. . . . As to gambling games, I earnestly entreat my children never to play at them, except on Festivals, and the women on new moons, but without money.<sup>1</sup> My daughters ought not to laugh and speak much with strangers, nor to dance. They ought always to be at home, and not be gadding about. They must not stand at the door (to see what their neighbours are doing). Most strongly I beg, most strictly I command, that the daughters of my house be not, God forbid, without work to do, for idleness leads to sin, but they must spin, or cook, or sew.

I earnestly beg my children<sup>2</sup> to be tolerant and humble to every man, as I was all my life. They must quarrel with none, but seek peace with all their might. Even if they lose money thereby, they must bear their loss and forgive, for God has many ways to sustain men. If any one slanders you do not retaliate by counter-offence, but excuse your calumniators and ask people to be silent about it, and you

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<sup>1</sup> The MS. is here defective.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Berliner's MS. refers this only to the daughters; the Bodl. MS. reads "בני."

yourselves set the example of reticence. Be upright in business affairs, and be not avaricious after other people's wealth.

Now, my sons and daughters, eat and drink only as much as necessary, as our good parents did, who ate moderately. The regular adoption of this course leads to habits of temperance. Be content and happy in your lot. Eat no large and expensive dinners. Our teachers have said, "Method in expenditure is half the cost." But accustom yourselves and wives, your sons and daughters always to wear nice and clean clothes, that God and men may love and honour you. Spend a little more than you can afford in this way, but you must not adopt non-Jewish fashions of dress. Never change the fashions of your fathers in your attire, and let your cloaks be broad without a buckle attached. Accustom yourselves to speak without making vows<sup>1</sup> or swearing to the truth of your assertions, for the breach of vows leads to many ills. Do not say "Gott" unnecessarily, but speak always of the "Creator, blessed be He," and never promise anything without the proviso, "if God wills." Thank God for everything. . . . Be not as dumb cattle that utter no word of gratitude, but thank God for his bounties at the time they occur, and in your prayers let the memory of these personal favours warm your hearts and prompt to especial fervour during the utterance of the communal thanks. When words of gratitude occur in the liturgy pause to silently reflect on the goodness of God to you that day. Be very particular to keep your houses clean and tidy; I always made a point of it, for every injurious condition and sickness and poverty are to be found in houses that are unclean. Be careful with the blessings; accept no divine gift without immediately uttering your thanks. Study the Torah, because it helps the formation of a noble character. Do not scoff, for it begins in chastisement and ends in destruction. Judge every man charitably and use your best effort to find a favourable explanation of conduct however suspicious. On Sabbaths and holidays seek to make happy poor unfortunate widows, and orphans ought always to be at your tables. Avoid gossip, for it leads to slander, hypocrisy and falsehood, all of which are vices abominable in the sight of the Lord. And as you speak no scandal, so listen to none, for if there were no customers there would be no mongers. Accept no invitations to dinner parties except for purposes of *מצוה*, such as weddings and funerals; and play no games for money, neither with dice nor with anything else. Be one of the first in the Synagogue, do not speak during prayers, but repeat the responses and after the service do acts of kindness which are equivalent to studying the law. I beg of you, my sons, my daughters, and my wife, and the whole

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<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, say "בלי נדר," etc.

congregation, let there be no funeral oration in my honour. Do not carry me on a bier, but wash me clean, comb my hair as in my lifetime, in order that I may go clean to my eternal resting-place, just as I used to go every Friday evening to the Synagogue. Drag me to my grave, and stop every four cubits, that I may get pardon. Put me in the ground at the right hand of my father, and even if it be a little too narrow, I am sure that my father loves me well enough to submit to the inconvenience and to draw me in unto him. If not, put me on his left, or near my mother or grandmother; and if that be not possible, bury me at the side of my daughter.

In striking contrast to the simplicity of the foregoing testament is the elaborate "Letter of Advice" which Solomon Alami dispatched to a pupil from Portugal. As he himself pathetically tells us, he was a participant in the sufferings in 1391, and his testament, written twenty-four years later (in beautiful rhymed prose), gives a very interesting account of the condition of contemporary Judaism. Fly without hesitation, he says, when expatriation is the only means of securing religious freedom; have no regard to your worldly affairs, or to your property, but go forth.<sup>1</sup> Besides the ordinary virtues, among them chastity and continence, Alami strongly inculcates the necessity of decorum in prayer. He laments the low esteem in which the Rabbis were held; and declares that Jews preferred educating their children for the meanest trade rather than devote them to the ministry, so low had it fallen in public opinion. People talked and laughed in Synagogue and ignored the Rabbi's exhortations, who, in fact, often failed to denounce abuses. "See how the leading men of the congregation either doze or talk in Synagogue during the sermon, while the women babble. It is not so in Churches; Christian men and women listen with wrapt attention

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<sup>1</sup> "If you should, God forbid," says Alexander Suesskind to his sons "ever actually come to the necessity of becoming martyrs for your faith, from which God deliver you and *עם הקדוש כל עמ*, meet death with the completest joy, so that God will receive you in the worlds above, and will say: 'Behold what a noble being I created; he spared not his body but bore chastisement or my honour, and gave up his life for the sanctification of my name

while their preachers address them. Christians are dumb, but Jews are deaf when the clergy reprove them." In prayer one should pray not for his own needs, but on behalf of the afflicted ; and return good for evil.

Avoid listening to love-songs which excite the passions. If God has graciously bestowed on you the gift of a sweet voice, use it in praising Him. Do not set prayers to Arabic tunes, a practice which has been promoted to suit the taste of effeminate men.

Similarly, he deprecates all attempts to foist Greek philosophy on to the Bible.<sup>1</sup> He strongly upholds the dignity of labour, but he also lays considerable stress on the minor amenities of social intercourse. One must not point, nor stroke one's beard, in company. He enunciates many minute rules for behaviour at meals ; enjoining his pupil not to be the first to begin to eat, not to swallow his food ravenously, and to be tidy in his dress and ways. Though he condemns luxurious expenditure in dress and jewellery, he nevertheless keenly feels the hardship of the enforced wearing of a distinctive Jewish attire. He strikes a local note when he deprecates undue consideration for descent. Family pride is a poor substitute for personal merit ; it is a reliance on buried predecessors who lie in their graves. The whole of Alami's "Letter" deserves translation, but I could not find space for more than the foregoing summary.

The Jewish ethical testaments are written in Hebrew. To this general statement there is hardly an exception. In later times some of the most widely read have been rendered into German or jargon, such as those of Asher ben Yechiel, Nachmanides, Elijah Wilna, Alexander Suesskind, Judah Chasid, Naphtali Cohen and Moses Sofer. Ibn Tibbon's testament, together with that of Maimonides, were translated into English, but rather as literary curiosities than for devotional use.<sup>2</sup> The testament of the late Chief

<sup>1</sup> Comp. and contrast the 15th century ספר המוסר of Ephraim of Modena (Lyck, 1871).

<sup>2</sup> Israel Luepschuetz bids his sons immediately after the week of

Rabbi, Dr. N. Adler, was recently published in abstract in English, but it was presumably composed in Hebrew. About two years ago the ethical will of a certain Harris Hershfield was published in Kansas City in the vernacular. An undated, but evidently modern, Jewish Testament in Provençal French verse, is possessed by the Library of the British Museum. But so far back as 1410 the will of Don Judah,<sup>1</sup> a Jewish native of Alba de Tormes, was written in Spanish, being dictated by the author from his death bed. It appears that one of his sons was wounded in the massacre of 1391.

Good and honourable is the man who in his last days and in old age dies to live. God grant it to me ; my hope was always in his love. . . . Do not bury me upright or lying down, but a strong chair shall be placed in the grave and my body must be seated thereon facing the east towards the rising sun.

Another ethical will was dictated in the same manner by the dying testator, and is thus given in the words of the bystanders. In 1653 Nathaniel Trabotti lay on his death-bed in Modena, and when after a long sleep he awoke, the spirit of God inspired him, and he called his pupils round his bed, and was to them like a king on his throne. He summoned the heads of the congregation, and, having washed his face and hands and sanctified himself as an angel of God, said : "I am 86 years old, and I know that the owner of the trust is coming to seek it back from me. If I have sometimes rebuked you harshly, forgive me. I did it only to turn you from sin." Then they wept and said, "We know it, and our sins are many. Forgive us for the trials we have caused you." "Fear not," he replied ;

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mourning to translate his testament for the benefit of his daughters, and this is not the only instance. Isaac Levinson wished his will translated into Russian, but that was for legal purposes.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Joseph Jacobs called my attention to this testament. See, *Amador de los Rios*, II., p. 615. A full translation of the will was kindly made for me by Mrs. Isaac Benoliel. I have to thank Dr. Friedlander for bringing Trabotti's testament under my notice.



“purify your hearts, remove hatred and passion. Support the study of the Law, be merciful to the poor, and open wide your storehouses to them. . . My sight was weak, and you have all come to my house to study to save me from the trouble of walking to and fro to the College. After my death let the study be conducted in the Synagogue. . . Appoint an officer to go every Friday to announce to all Jewish merchants that the Sabbath is nigh, that they may shut their shops. . . Let not the men who idly frequent places of amusement to play dice, or games with the cards which they always carry in their pockets, let them not mention the name of God, as is their wont. If they act honestly and speak the truth with heart and lip, and do not use the divine name wantonly, their sins will be forgiven. . . Those who have bought all the *mitzvoth* for the whole year must pay the amount forthwith to the treasurer. If they refuse they must be brought before the civil courts.”

Nathaniel then called for Abraham Gratiano, whom he wished to succeed him; he placed his hands on his head and “imparted his honour to him.” He gave directions for the disposal of his property, but the reporter omitted all these as of no importance! The whole of this scene is impressive, and would be more so but that it is obviously an echo of the Talmudic description of the death of Rabbi.

The disregard of money, indicated in the preceding paragraph, is paralleled in many of the testaments. Masus feelingly remarks:—

Let not your hearts be sore because I cannot leave you any inheritance as other fathers do; but my destiny was not for wealth, and for wealth I never strove. Each day's bread to eat, and clothes to wear, was all I sought to acquire. Naked I came into the world, naked I leave it. Man has other aims, and my testament will teach you what they are.

One point that I have omitted from Trabotti's injunctions will recall a similar direction given by Eleazar the Levite. Trabotti desired that his bier should be roughly

dragged to the grave to chastise his body for his sins. But the bystanders tearfully entreated him to release them from the obligation of dishonouring his remains, and he consented to withdraw the order. But in many of the testaments even more violent measures are seriously suggested. The coffin is sometimes ordered to be thrown to the ground and other indignities to be shown. In order to avoid needless repetitions I will quote the form that these directions take in the will of Masus ben Judah Loeb. Masus not only carries the idea to an excessive length, but supplies the explanation.

At the time when my body is removed from the bed to lie on the ground two shall come, and one shall take my two hands and shall seize me round the neck, one hand with outstretched fingers to the right, the other to the left. He shall make the fingers meet, and press tightly like a cord or cloth, as though carrying out the sentence of execution by strangulation. Some men shall seize me by the legs roughly, and shall lift me out of the bed, and shall throw me on the ground ; typical of death by stoning. They shall drop on my heart three drops (neither more nor less) of wax from a lighted candle, to symbolise death by burning.

They shall take a stone and place it as a pillow under my head, and my head shall remain on it for some minutes, as though I were to be executed with the sword.

Then shall all say, "If this man during his life has incurred the penalty of death by one of the four legal modes of execution let this be now taken in place of it, and his sin be pardoned, so that in all it be the same as though he had suffered in his life-time."<sup>1</sup>

Often the testator directs that his wife and children are not to participate in the preparations for the interment ; and, moreover, that the sons are not to follow their father's funeral. Some command the *shofar*<sup>2</sup> or ram's horn to be sounded after the purification of the body, to drive away

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<sup>1</sup> Similar directions are also given by Aaron of Karlin, (who repeats the order), Ezekiel Katzenellenbogen (who has a curious passage on the subject), Naphtali Cohen and S. Kluger.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps originally this was merely a public announcement of the death. See *Moed Katon*, 27b.

the "destroying children," who would otherwise come to claim inheritance with the true children of the departed.<sup>1</sup> Many again leave specific directions as to the reading of the Mishnah and Talmud during the year of mourning; the orders vary very greatly in detail, but the main idea is the same. The father, if an author of religious works, usually asks his children to read and re-read his books, and fain would have the preacher quote passages therefrom in the funeral oration. But almost without exception the testators earnestly entreat that no eulogistic address be delivered over their remains. Some urge this self-denying ordinance with singular tenacity, and even anxiety. The preacher, in the presence of the dead, might be inclined to exaggerate the praises of the departed, and thus be guilty of falsehood and flattery. This is the chief motive for declining the honour of a *hesped*, but many were equally moved by a sincere humility of disposition and a sense of their unworthiness.<sup>2</sup> The testament itself was mostly ordered to be read at stated intervals daily, weekly, or monthly, or four times a year. Fasting on the Yahrzeit, or anniversary, of the father's death, is a common Jewish practice, and is often enjoined in the testaments.<sup>3</sup> Israel Luepschuetz, however, restricts the fast to only half the day, "for so my fathers bade me." This statement gives an excellent insight into the way in which family traditions grow up. The same testator frees his sons from the obligation of wearing black, and very thoughtfully tells his daughters that they are only to put on mourning if their husbands approve. Joel Shamariah, who died on the 1st of

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<sup>1</sup> Some are very particular in their directions on this point. Kluger repeats the order no less than three times. See Erubin 18b, and the account given in the Travels of Benjamin, II., p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Aaron of Karlin says that any one that has anything to say in his *dispraise* may say it.

<sup>3</sup> David Altaras orders his children to fast on the following days:—(1) the day of his death, (2) at the end of the week of mourning, (3) at the end of the month, (4) at the end of the eleventh month, (5) at the end of the full year.

Nisan ("for he was needed in the College on high"), and who fasted every day except Sabbaths and festivals, is anxious to be buried in the old cemetery by the side of his father. Naphtali Cohen wished wax candles to be placed on his seat in synagogue during the first year after his death, and his wife, "whom I love as myself," is entreated to go to his grave and pray for his soul on the day before every new moon. Aaron of Karlin desired that no man should be buried near him who was not confidently known to be one whom he (Aaron) would like to have as a neighbour.<sup>1</sup> Masus ben Judah pathetically says:—"In my life I dwelt in narrow and straitened circumstances; deal not so with me in my death. Inter me not in a narrow grave, but enlarge the place of my eternal rest." At times these burial orders have utilitarian motives. Solomon Heine (1844) enjoined that his funeral was not to take place within seventy-two hours of his death, in order that life might be proved to be extinct. He asks to be buried at eight o'clock in the morning, and, despite his enormous wealth, without any pomp and ceremony. Among his munificent charitable bequests were two each of 4,000 marks—the one towards the building of the Church of St. Peter, another in aid of the re-building of the Church of St. Nicholas. Ezekiel Katzenellenbogen minutely ordered that seven square holes should be bored in his coffin, and gives the dimension of each, with a diagram. Jonah Landsofer, with prophetic foresight as to the indiscretion of modern biographers, orders that only those of his papers that were so marked were to be published, and even with those the editor was to exercise a selective discretion. Samuel Aboab, the opponent of Sabbatai Zevi, takes the famous utterance of Micah vi. 8 as his text. He orders that a scroll of the law shall not be placed on the bier. Several even write their own epitaphs, which are of a

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<sup>1</sup> Naphtali Cohen begged that no one should take part in preparing him for burial but those possessing an affinity with his soul.

severely simple character. Akiba Eger left his own epitaph: "Here lies R. Akiba Eger," but the Posen congregation converted the conventional "R." into the honourable "Rabbenu." Aaron ben Abraham asks his children not to incur much expense in buying a grave to bury him among the great, for he did not desire that. So Kluger wished to be buried not among the great and wealthy, but near the poor. One father<sup>1</sup> urges his son not to postpone his marriage until the end of the year of mourning. This individual had been throughout his life an ardent match-maker. Chayim Vital (1620) ordered his cabbalistic notes to be buried with him; Herrara, on the other hand, left a large sum to defray the cost of publishing his own mystical writings (1639).<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most remarkable request is that of Saul Hirschel, who died in London in 1794. He had been concerned in a controversy as to the genuineness of a work (בשמים ראש) which he was suspected of forging, and seems to have lived a rather friendless life. He directs that he was to be taken as he was found, and buried in his clothes in some forest, or wherever else they liked, "provided that it be distant from the graves of other men." His wishes were not fulfilled, indeed, his testament was not found until after his interment. At peace with men, among whom living he had found no peace, he was buried with every honour, and his name is still, strangely enough, mentioned in the memorial roll of the official Rabbis of London. We note other differences of sentiment, as, for instance, while one testator wishes his sons to weep bitterly, another begs them not to give way to excessive grief. One testator orders some sods of treasured Palestinian soil to be buried with him; another that he was to be buried in the cerements he always carried with him on his journeys wrapped in a black cloth. David Altaras was wise in his generation when he bade that no rhymes should be engraven on his tombstone. Strangely enough, he also

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<sup>1</sup> *Book of the Pious*, § 505.

<sup>2</sup> Graetz, x. 127, 129.

tells us that he never ate meat during Lent, because the meat sold was often stale, owing to the Christian butchers killing no animals at that period.

Some of these directions and prohibitions are curious enough, but the testament of Judah Chasid, who lived at the beginning of the thirteenth century, is a curiosity throughout. There can be little doubt that the testament is spurious, but whoever be the author it contains a mass of superstitions, many of them in direct conflict to express statements in the Talmud.<sup>1</sup> This would seem to confirm Güdemann's hypothesis that the school, from which the *Book of the Pious* (with which Judah Chasid's testament is usually printed) proceeded, was animated by a spirit antagonistic to Rabbinism and the Talmud. While it is regrettable enough that Judah Chasid's commands found obedient and willing executors, the common sense of the Rabbis enabled them to triumph over this attempt to foist on to Judaism extraneous elements of the most pernicious and undesirable nature. Ezekiel Landau was actually consulted as to whether a man might marry a girl whose father was his namesake—an alliance forbidden in Judah Chasid's testament, section 22. The response of Landau is a fine piece of

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<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel Landau ביהודה נודע question 79 of אה"ע. To the passages there quoted add Tossefta on *Sabbath*, which characterises as idolatrous the popular objection to "crowing hens." It is strange to note how many of Judah Chasid's injunctions are still popular superstitions in England. For Judah Chasid see Güdemann, "Cultur Geschichte," 1880, and the same work, p. 245, for other testaments. The *Responsa* (ש"ת) in general contain many entries which have an intimate bearing on the testament literature. Many of these passages naturally however concern legal rather than ethical subjects. See כרך של רומי 36b, where a צוואה by the author of שולחן גבוה is quoted. In Joseph Caro's אבקת רובל § 74 there is a question concerning a צוואה (the writer left a *soltano* for the scribe who wrote the document). In שו"ת פרח מטה אהרן Part I. § 65, the case is considered of a man who "ordered (צוה) that his eldest daughter should be married to the son of a certain sage, and that they should acquire for her one handmaiden." See also קורא הדורות ed. Cassel, p. 46b and 36a. These are only a few of the many such that must occur in these interesting collections of Rabbinical correspondence.

indignant and scathing contempt for such puerilities. Yet he deals tenderly with Judah Chasid himself. True, said Landau, many of the things he forbids are in contradiction to the Talmud; but the author meant his remarks to apply exclusively to his own descendants. "By prophetic foreknowledge he saw that certain marriages would not prosper if contracted in his family, but he did not mean to apply the same rule to Jews in general." Yet Landau's loyalty to a great name did not prevent him from denouncing the question of his correspondent as unworthy of serious consideration.

From many of the testaments, which I cannot hope to quote at any length, I have already made some citations in the preceding paragraphs. From the sixteenth century onwards the number of Jewish ethical wills becomes ever greater. These testaments it is unnecessary to arrange in chronological order, but the internal history of Judaism continues to mirror itself forth in their pages. The controversy anent the study of philosophy died a natural death, or rather solved itself by general indifference. With Mendelssohn a new question was brought to a culminating point, and Judaism has not yet passed beyond it.

We may note in some of the later testaments indications of the writers' views on the adoption of a pure language, on the maintenance of a distinctively Jewish dress, on the use of the vernacular in prayer. As the centuries pass, ancient custom loses its hold on the people's hearts, and some of the testaments betray the anxiety of fathers that their children at least shall not displace the old for the new. But besides these less important and evanescent matters, the durable and fundamental rules of moral conduct continue to gain in emphasis, and are enunciated in more modern language. The time was, for instance, when, under the heading of gambling, dice-playing was denounced; from the fifteenth century, card-playing is raised to this bad eminence, in the eighteenth, lotteries and betting. The latter, which is a characteristically English vice,

accordingly recurs in the testament of Leb Norden, an English Jew (1741), whose objection to betting was based on the consideration that "the gambler evinced a desire to become rich contrary to the will of God"; while it also involved waste of time, and led inevitably to destruction. The denunciations of mere money-making and of usury are as vigorous as of yore, and the entreaty to freely pardon injuries becomes even more earnestly eloquent.

Do good to all men, evil to none ; even to the non-Jew in the street, even to an enemy who has pursued you with relentless hate. If you have an opportunity of revenge, do not avail yourselves of it, but load your adversary with favours. Never refuse a favour to any person, be he non-Jew, or even an enemy. If your foe is seeking your hurt you may prevent him, but you must not injure him beyond the point of rendering him powerless to harm you. If an opportunity offer of serving him, thank God for the chance, and though he has done you the most fearful wrongs, forget the injuries you have sustained at his hands. Make yourselves wings like eagles to succour him, and refrain from reminding him by a word of his former conduct.<sup>1</sup>

The same moral is enforced in the testament of Joel Shamariah by a piece of practical psychology.

If any one did aught to injure me, yet I loved him in my heart. If I felt inclined to hate him, I at once began to *utter* praises, so that gradually I brought my heart to genuine love of the man who had wronged me.

Fidelity to one's word must be resolutely preserved ; but a vow to do wrong may be broken.

Charity is enforced sometimes quaintly enough, always strongly.

Love thy neighbour as thyself ; hence, when I saw any one ill, I dosed him with remedies I had myself tried.<sup>2</sup>

No one ever became poor through giving too much in charity.<sup>3</sup>

Be careful with the legacy of money I leave you, for miracles do

<sup>1</sup> Israel Luepschuetz. There is one enemy, however, whom he can hardly forgive, that is the censor who wickedly mutilated his works.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Suesskind.

<sup>3</sup> Joel Shamariah.



not happen every day. But be not a miser when almsgiving is concerned."<sup>1</sup>

Saul Wahl, whom legend places on the throne of Poland (1630), was presented with a magnificent chain studded with jewels, in return for important State services. He directed, in his testament, that this chain was to be sold and the proceeds distributed among the poor.

If a beggar comes to you, give him what you can and do not put him to shame, for God stands at his right hand.<sup>2</sup>

Zechariah, of Porto, who had no desire for fame during his lifetime, left behind him a compilation forming an index to the texts adapted to the use of *darshanim* or preachers. It belongs to a class of books become obsolete; and would hardly now serve the author's purpose of enabling a *darshan* to see at a glance whether his own ideas were original or not! The bulk of his property, which seems to have been very large, he bestowed in ways at least intended to be charitable.<sup>3</sup> The directions as to almsgiving are cast in so generous a mould in these wills that it is only rarely that discrimination is counselled. Personal service, the invitation of the poor to meals, are, as of old, favourite precepts of Jewish fathers. As to posthumous reputation, Kluger was so little ambitious of it that when directing the publication of his MSS. he said that if his executors wished to print his writings *as their own* he did not object; but he wished them published at all hazards.

Moses Sofer will not have his children read the books of Moses of Dessau (Mendelssohn); they must never go to the theatre; his daughters are not to read German novels.<sup>4</sup> "Say not that the times have changed, for our Father never changes." The Rabbi who is to succeed him must

<sup>1</sup> Leb Norden.

<sup>2</sup> Sabbatai Hurwitz.

<sup>3</sup> See *המזכיר אברהם* Venice, 1675, preface.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly Abraham Danzig; Jonah Landsofer permits praying in German, and says, "Teach your daughters to read books printed in German and see that your sons' wives can do likewise."

preach in jargon. Sofer impresses on his daughters and his sons' wives that they must not wear low-necked dresses, nor even wear false hair. He does not neglect moral injunctions, however, and lays particular stress on the folly and sinfulness of pride.

We are the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, pupils of Moses, our master, servants of David the king. Our father said, "I am dust and ashes," our master asked, "What are *we*?" our king declared, "I am a worm and not a man." The King for whom we hope will reveal himself in the guise of a beggar riding on an ass. Whence then should we derive pride?

Centuries before, Solomon Alami had spoken against the "pride of place," which is a subtle and baneful form of the vice.

If you go up to read the law, be called up like everyone else, and do not make a fuss about being first or last.

Abraham Danzig<sup>1</sup> (1738-1821), the author of the popular *Life of Man* (חיי אדם) and similar works, is as opposed as Sofer to the assumption of ordinary attire. With the German Jews, he says, things were different, for they always dressed like other Germans; hence their example was not a precedent for imitation. He enforces quaintly, but effectively, the serious calls of life.

In your business be honest and upright. Do not devote yourselves to the acquisition of wealth and to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. If you engage in a pious and honourable life, you need not entirely forego these pleasures, but do not make them your first thought. A man goes to Leipzig on business: he trades energetically, and then buys some ornaments for his wife and children. This rejoices them. If, however, he wastes his whole time in buying gew-gaws to the neglect of his business, and on returning has only the presents to show and no merchandise, his wife slaps his face and says: 'Fool, what do I want with this rubbish? Why did you not attend to your business?'

Virtue is praised and vice blamed; as the one is conducive,

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<sup>1</sup> He particularly asks that his testament shall be printed without errors. However this may have been in the first edition (1821), the second edition is disfigured with many misprints.

the other antagonistic, to the love of God. Tears are declared of the utmost efficacy in prayer, and Masus laughs to scorn those who would maintain that people cannot cry at will.

Tears are the only refuge against oppression and suffering. I have wept so much that my sight has been dimmed for many years.

On the other hand, while enjoining his sons to weep copiously at their night-prayers, Moses of Prague nevertheless adds later on :

Always pray joyfully and be cheerful ; for melancholy is a great evil.

As Francis of Assisi proved in his own character, tears are not necessarily associated with austerity.

The saving power of family concord finds much prominence. Dissension is heartily condemned, and daughters-in-law are especially warned against rivalry and quarreling. Brothers and sisters must pay one another attentions, and keep one another informed of their good or bad fortunes. The Gaon Elijah entreats his mother and wife to mutual honour and to live in peace during his absence from them.<sup>1</sup>

When brother parts from brother or sister, or when you meet, always embrace ; but, my sons, kiss your sisters on the hand, kiss the lips only of your brothers. Help one another. . . . Every Nisan and Elul write mutual greetings ; on the birthday of each, let all the rest send their congratulations.<sup>2</sup> . . . Throughout my life, whenever I read my prayers, I felt as though I still stood a child before my dear and pious mother, who dictated every word to me.

The worshipper was to utter an especially fervent "Amen" after the prayer daily repeated for peace. This mildness and consideration was to be extended by employers to their servants. "I never abused, much less did I ever strike a servant," says Suesskind ; while others go yet farther : "I

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<sup>1</sup> "Honour your mother, and never cause her any sorrow ; and see that your wife treats her with respect." (S. Kluger.)

<sup>2</sup> A list of the birthdays of the family follows this injunction of Luepschuetz.

never asked my servants, Jewish or Christian," says Lüpschuetz, "to do unpleasant services for me. When I was a child and I asked the Jewish servant *who was sitting at table with us* to give me some water, my mother rebuked me."

The head of the family must take an intimate interest in the welfare of the whole household. "It is proper to address them for half an hour a week on any matter that needs exhortation." The following is an amusing piece of family advice:—

My daughters and daughters-in-law, if your husbands are angry, go outside and do not return until their rage is over and then reprove them."

The same father, Sheftel Hurwitz, will not permit dancing by members of the opposite sexes, even if the couple do not touch hands. "If you dance face to face, Satan dances between you."

Alexander Suesskind stands out as a remarkable personality. To every act of his life, he was impelled by the love of God; no incident however small, but had its place in the divine purpose. This is shown in the noble tone of his whole testament, which has become deservedly popular, as well as in some very curious traits.

If ever I wanted anything and found that I possessed it and need not borrow it from others, I thanked God. When I took snuff I did likewise because one might be too poor to buy it. I always said God is just whenever calamity came on me. Thus did I when I spilt my snuff. If I found that though the box fell, none of the snuff dropped out, I thanked God with lips filled with joy. If I could not find the box I accepted צרוק הדין the divine judgment, and when an hour later I found it, I rejoiced and thanked the Lord!

His acute sensibility is further seen in the following touching entry:—

It is a common practice with Jews that when a member of the community has died during the night, the beadle when he comes to summon us to synagogue, gives only two instead of the usual three knocks, as a sign of death. When he only knocked twice I sighed, but when thrice, my heart leapt up with joy!

An almost equal moral sensitiveness marks the suggestion of Sheftel Hurwitz to keep a written account of one's sins in order to ensure due penitence.<sup>1</sup> Sensitiveness of another character is shown in the following utterance which might easily be paralleled from other ethical wills.

It is said that at the time of death Satan stands by a man tempting him to deny his faith, and a man is weak in his mind at that hour, and does not know what he is doing. Therefore I declare that any evil thoughts that may enter my mind at that time are not my thoughts but are hereby annulled.

The controversies of the seventeenth century raging round the Cabbala and pseudo-messiah, are reflected in the testaments of the period. Prophecies and dreams are not to be regarded; astrology is forbidden. The antipathy to the new Chassidism led one testator to leave as a condition to a charitable bequest, that no member of that sect should participate in its benefits. This one can understand, seeing that some members of the sect were professional beggars.

Decorum in synagogue, on which Alami expressed himself so strongly, is a subject that recurs in the later wills. It is better not to go to synagogue at all, than to go there and talk even concerning matters of Torah. The custom of the Sephardim who kept the children in order by overawing them is in one instance lauded. The children, small and big, were located together, and an overseer stood over them to enforce good behaviour with a stick.<sup>2</sup> According to another testator, slovenliness in utterance was the cause of the continued trials of the Jews, for their prayers were not efficacious from being indistinctly enunciated. If necessary, to ensure devout attention, the eyes were to be closed

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Howell's *Familiar Letters* (ed. Jacobs, p. 335). "Before I go to bed, I make a scrutiny what peccant humours have reign'd in me that day; and so I reconcile myself to my Creator, and strike a tally in the Exchequer of Heaven for my *quietus est*, ere I close my eyes, and leave no burden upon my conscience."

<sup>2</sup> This passage is not actually in the testament, but in the תוכחת מוסר that precedes.

during prayer; while one father, following a precept of the *Book of the Pious*, counsels his son to stand on his toes to recover his self-possession, and drive away strange thoughts. Prayers were not to be mechanical; private joys and sorrows were to be introduced in extemporised thanksgiving or in silent, grateful meditation when the communal thanks were being expressed. Elijah Wilna in his testament, advises his wife and daughter not to go to synagogue at all. Pray at home, for in synagogue you cannot avoid scandal and frivolity. The daughter might see others better dressed than herself, and feel envious, and gossip about it when she got home. Elijah felt so keenly the evil effects of the habit of scandal-mongering on the character, of harsh words and of falsehood, that he enjoined that if these offences were committed by his children, the latter were to be severely beaten. Yet instruction was to be imparted gently; rough methods were to be avoided, and gifts were to be bestowed in order to encourage the children to progress. It will be noted that daughters receive full attention from their fathers in these testaments, though in matters of education, they were not placed on a level with the sons. Jonah Landsofer of Prague, particularly desires that his daughters and his sons' wives should be taught to read German. Marriage must not be deferred, yet very early marriages are strongly deprecated. Originally, says Jonah, Jews married much earlier, but physical development is slower now than in ancient times.

When you are arranging a marriage between two parties, never exaggerate, and always tell the truth. Therefore it was that in the first times, none but students of the Law were *shadchanim* (match makers).<sup>1</sup>

The injunctions as to the choice of a wife are naturally numerous and minute. Moral excellencies are to be sought, not beauty or riches. Wealth coming as the bridal dowry,

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<sup>1</sup> This is against a statement in the Talmud. Maharil, I may add, was a *Shadchan*, but accepted no fees.

was esteemed a blessing only in so far as by relieving the husband from the need of constant devotion to business, it supplied the necessary leisure for "higher culture," to use the modern phrase. Children were a loving grace of God, in the service of whom they might renew the father's own life.

And in the same way we could follow these moral guides into other phases of life, but for the present as in the conventional three-volume novel, we will stop short with the arrangements for marriage. Many of the sentiments that I have quoted in the course of the preceding passages are of Talmudic origin, and others are the common property of Jewish ethical writers of all ages. Perhaps at some future date I may carry the enquiry further, and attempt to discuss in how far the children practised what the fathers preached. Yet it cannot be that so much simple goodness thus simply expressed fell in dead words on dead ears; it spoke with a living voice pleading for the right, when the grave had claimed its own, echoing the one constant refrain—

"In your virtues show yourselves our sons."

I. ABRAHAMS.

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AARON OF KARLIN (Johannisberg? 1855? 8vo. Also Warsaw, 1878, in דברי קדושים).

AARON BEN ABRAHAM AT RAWICZ (ספר חדרכה, Breslau, 1830, 4to).

AARON MOSES, מגזע צבי (Czernitz, date כי טוב לישראל).

ABRAHAM BEN SABBATAI HURWITZ, ספר יש נוחלין, Prague, 1615, 4to., Amsterdam, 1701. Also ברית אברהם).

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<sup>1</sup> I have derived a considerable part of the works here enumerated from the Catalogues of Zedner, Steinschneider, Neubauer and Ben Jacob (*Ozar Hasefarim*).

ABRAHAM DANZIG (בית אברהם, Wilna, 1821; Warsaw, 1841; Königsberg, 1845).

ADLER, Dr. NATHAN (*Jewish Chronicle*, London, Jan. 1891).

AKIBA EGER.<sup>1</sup>

ALEXANDER SUESSKIND BEN MOSES (Grodno, 1794, 8vo. Often reprinted).

ASHER BEN YECHIEL (ארחות חיים, Venice, 1578, 32mo.).

BENJAMIN (ZEEB WOLF) FISCHHOF (published in מקור חכמה, ed. 2, Berlin, 1711).

DAVID BEN SOLOMON ALTARAS (צו"ף דב"ש, Venice, 1714, 16mo.).

DAVID FRIESENHAUSEN (Vienna, 1820, 8vo.).

ELEAZAR BEN ISAAC (the Great) OF WORMS (ארחות חיים, Venice, 1623, 12mo. This is not the same as the ארחות חיים (להרא"ש).

ELEAZAR BEN SAMUEL THE LEVITE. The Testament of Eleazar will, I hope, appear in the next number of the Review. Portions of the will next in my list will also be given. This latter MS. I have now acquired through the kindness of Dr. Berliner. Also the testament of Leb Norden will probably be published in the July number.

ELIJAH, (כבא אליהו דרושים וצוואה מר' אליהו במהרש"ל,

ELIJAH WILNA (אגרת לבני ביהו), in ספר עלים לתרופה, 1856, 8vo.).

EZEKIEL BEN ABRAHAM KATZENELLENBOGEN (Amsterdam, 1750, 8vo. Second edition, Wilna, 1871).

HARRIS HERSHFELD (*Kansas City Times*, Oct. 28th, 1888).

ISAAC BEER LEVINSON (written 1859. ספר הזכרונות, Warsaw, 1878).

ISAAC PINTO (רוח נדיבה, 1844).

ISRAEL BAALSHEM (ספר צוואות ריב"ש והנהגות ישרות), in ספר עלים לתרופה, 1856, 8vo.).

ISRAEL BEN ELEAZAR LESNENSIS (Derenfort, 1694).

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<sup>1</sup> The testament of Akiba Eger I know only from the references in the תולדות ר' עקיבא איגר, Berlin, 1862.



ISRAEL BEN GEDALIAH LUEPSCHUETZ (תפארת ישראל, 1861, 8vo.).

JACOB ASHERI BEN הרה"ש (ed. Schechter, Pressburg, 1885, 8vo.).

JACOB OF LISSA (published in some Siddurim?).

JOEL BEN ABRAHAM SHEMARIAH (Wilna? 1800? 8vo.).

JONAH LAND-SOFER OF PRAGUE (in the דרך טובים, F. o/M., 1717, 32mo., by Abraham ben Reuben Deutz. Also in מעגלי קצירה).

JOSEPH IBN CASPI (ספר המוסר, in Eleazar Ashkenazi's טעם זקנים, F. o/M., 1854, 8vo.).

JUDAH ASHERI (ben הרה"ש. See Jacob Asheri).

JUDAH CHASID (see Cat. Bodl., column 1323).

JUDAH BEN SAUL IBN TIBBON (ed. Steinschneider, Berlin, 1852, 8vo.; and Edelmann, London, דרך טובים. This is not the same work as mentioned above).

JUDAH (DON) DE ALBA DE TORMES (1410, Amador de los Rios, vol. II., 615-7).

JUIF (Testament d'un Juif de la Ville de Carpentras. Modern Provençal French).

LEB NORDEN. The MS. of this צוואה is in the library of the Beth Hamidrash, London.

MASUS BEN JUDAH LOEB (1800? 4to.).

MEIR, פישל (MS. Breslau Seminary, No. 16).

MOSES (CHASID) OF PRAGUE (דרך טובים, 1717, and partly as אגרת מוסר, 1720. Also in Siddurim).

MOSES MAIMONIDES (see Judah Ibn Tibbon. The First edition, which does not contain the first portions, Venice, 1544, 8vo.).

MOSES NACHMANIDES (ספר תפוחי זהב in אגרת של הרמב"ן, by Elijah ben Moses de Vides, 1623, 8vo. Also with Elijah Wilna, q.v.; and in Siddurim דרך החיים).

MOSES BEN SAMUEL SOFER, ספר צוואות משה, Vienna, 1863, 8vo., Ungvar, 1864).

NAPHTALI BEN ISAAC COHEN (8vo., 1719? Berlin, 1729, 12mo., Frankfort o/Oder, 1750? Wilna, 1803; Warsaw, 1878).

NATHANIEL TRABOTTI (Berliner-Hoffmann, *Magazin*, Berlin, 1887; IV., 11-22).

SABBATAI (SHEFTEL) HURWITZ (Frankfort o/Oder, 1690, 8vo. Also with שולחן ארבע, 1783).

SAMUEL BEN ABRAHAM ABOAB (Ghirondi, תולדות גדולי ישראל).

SAUL BEN ZEVI HIRSCHEL (written 1794, published in *Orient*, 1844, p. 712).

SOLOMON ALAMI (אגרת מוסר, Jellinek, Leipzig, 1854; Vienna, 1872).

SOLOMON HEINE (רוח נדיבה. See Isaac Pinto).

SOLOMON, son of the Martyr Isaac ben Zadok (MS. Steinschneider, Cat. Heb. MSS. in Lug. Batav. Warn., 59[3]).

SOLOMON KLUGER (לשון צדיק, together with שערי בנימין, Ungvar, 4to., 1870).

SELKE LICHTENSTADT (תומר דבורה, Wilmersdorf, 1719, 8vo.).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jacob Emden, Chacham Zevi, and one or two others I know, wrote צוואות, but I have no information as to publication. The testament of Phineas Katzenellenbogen (Bodl. Cat., Neubauer 2315), hardly belongs to this series.